

Ricin
Report immediately to Maine CDC 1-800-821-5821

Definition	Treatment
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Transmission	Exclusion
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Definition

Ricin is a poison found naturally in castor beans. Ricin can be in the form of a powder, mist, or pellet. Most ricin poisonings have occurred when the ricin was injected or when the person swallowed the ricin. Ricin poisoning reports are to be strongly considered as terrorism incidents until determined otherwise.

Signs and symptoms

Symptoms depend on the method of transmission and can occur 4 hours to 24 hours after exposure. When an exposure occurs, symptoms can vary. Symptoms may include but are not limited to:

- vomiting, bloody diarrhea, difficulty breathing, fever, cough, nausea, seizures, liver failure, and kidney failure.

Transmission

It would take a deliberate act to make ricin and use it to poison people. Transmission can occur through skin or eye exposure, ingestion, injection, or inhalation. Ricin poisoning is not contagious. It cannot spread from person to person through casual contact.

Diagnosis

Ricin poisoning is diagnosed by laboratory testing performed at designated laboratories.

Treatment Recommendations

- If symptoms are noted, notify law enforcement and seek medical attention immediately at a hospital.
- There is no specific treatment or antidote for ricin poisoning.
- Providers would treat the symptoms.

Role of the School Nurse

Prevention

- Unintentional exposure to ricin is highly unlikely, except through the ingestion of castor beans.
- There is no vaccine licensed to prevent ricin poisoning.

Exclusions

- There are no exclusions indicated.

Reporting Requirements

- Ricin poisoning is reportable – report immediately to 1-800-821-5821.

Resources

Federal CDC Ricin website: <http://www.bt.cdc.gov/agent/ricin/>